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# Inside Information

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USDA  
JANUARY

## JOURNALISTS' CONFERENCE PLANNED IN MARCH

Jim Lafferty, chief of the News Division of USDA's Office of Information, has announced that OI plans a conference for journalists March 6-8 in Washington, D.C.

Most of the conference will be held at USDA, but there will be a luncheon on Capitol Hill March 7. Legislators important to the farm bill are expected to attend the luncheon.

At USDA, departmental officials will explain the farm agenda through this century, with emphasis on farm legislation.

The third day of the conference has been set aside for the press to conduct follow-up interviews.

For more information about the conference, contact Lafferty in Room 406-A, USDA, Washington, DC 20250. His Dialcom electronic mailbox is AGR004. His telephone number is (202) 447-4026.

## USDA DESIGN SEMINAR SET FOR MARCH

The Design Division of USDA's Office of Information will conduct a seminar in March for USDA agency personnel who want to get better acquainted with the division's capabilities.

"We want to explain how and why our shop operates," explained George Baka, division chief. "We will be circulating questionnaires to the agency information directors and their staffs to see what they want on the agenda.

"However, I imagine we'll be getting into explanations of paperwork and the like. I believe we can be more useful to the agencies if they better understand our operations."

The exact date of the seminar will be set later--after the questionnaires are returned. Baka hopes for a quick turn around on the questionnaires and a mid-March conference date.



## USDA GRAD SCHOOL OFFERS HELP TO AGENCIES

It's too late to register for classes this winter in the USDA Graduate School in Washington, D.C., but Karen Niles, director of evening and individual learning programs at the school, wants agencies to know they might be able to take advantage of the school's facilities in the future.

Speaking at a public affairs council meeting for USDA agency information directors, Niles noted that courses can be designed to meet specific agency needs.

With the school's correspondence-school capabilities, Niles said the Grad School has even developed courses for widely-scattered field personnel of USDA agencies.

She emphasized, however, that USDA is not the school's only clients--that any group across the country can use the school.

Public affairs/information courses offered this winter during the day include an editing workshop for managers and supervisors, effective writing, technical writing, report writing, effective listening and increased productivity through stress management.

Evening courses cover such subjects as printing layout and design, publishing management, introduction to computer graphics, writing for the print media and publications such as newsletters and house organs.

Anyone interested in a USDA Graduate School catalog or having courses designed to meet specific group needs may contact Niles at the USDA Graduate School, Room 1031-S, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250. Her telephone number is (202) 447-5885.

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BEES ARE LEAD PLAYERS IN NEW USDA FILM

The sound of their buzzing permeates. You see all of them flying. swarming, attacking. Involuntarily you reach out to bat them away.

But they are only on the screen.

You laugh nervously when the scientists show you how they actually encourage those Africanized bees to attack. You count the stingers in the target board that could have been your arm.

You watch the close-up shot of a scientist explaining the research and watch the bees crawl up her protective face mask.

You wonder: Who took these pictures? Who recorded those sounds? Who had the nerve to get so close?

It turns out the cameraman is Ron Hamilton of the Video & Film Division of USDA's Office of Information, and the soundman is Linwood Jones of the same shop.

They flew down to Venezuela at the behest of Bill Pemble, TV and video specialist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, who wanted to prove that research is, indeed, underway to deal with the Africanized bees which are making their way inexorably toward the United States.

Hamilton and Jordan wore double bee suits for protection during the recording, and painted their equipment white because these bees, in protecting their hives, will attack anything that is dark colored, Pemble explains.

Pemble plans for the 14-1/2-minute film, "Killer Bee Countdown," to be available in videotape as well as film and to be available for purchase from the National Audiovisual Center, Washington, DC 20409.

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## IMPACT OF MASS MEDIA MANY AND VARIED

Citizens perceive that mass media, of all institutions, have the greatest influence on the life of the community, according to a study conducted for local government in Louisville, Ky., and reported in the December issue of SOCIAL SCIENCE MONITOR for public relations and advertising executives.

Television/radio and daily newspapers ranked far above other groups in terms of their perceived influence on the community. Universities and colleges were ranked low, along with organized labor, retail stores/businesses and the legal and medical professions.

On the other hand, television/radio and daily newspapers were not seen as being as positive an influence on the community as some of its other institutions, and broadcasting ranked lower than the print media, according to the information carried originally in JOURNALISM QUARTERLY last summer.

Another item, carried originally in PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY, discusses the "third person effect" formulated by W. Phillips Davison, professor of journalism and sociology at Columbia University.

The "third person" is someone who looks at a message in the media and thinks "that will have an effect on someone else" and takes action accordingly. Lovers have taken advantage of this effect over the years, the MONITOR says, when they hope to influence the behavior of the loved one by seeming to direct their attention to someone else.

Explained the MONITOR: "Davison suggests that most people tend to think they themselves are not influenced by the media, but they overestimate the influence of the media on the attitudes and behavior of others."

Other subjects in the December SOCIAL SCIENCE MONITOR include: Negative effects from a media report are enhanced by visuals but are softened by the use of a corporate reply to charges within the same report; physiological changes still not reliable in measuring media effects; and a single television program can have long-term effects only under some conditions, but one-time national programs can have temporary effects which fade quickly.

The December issue also carries an index of articles presented in 1984. For additional information, write to Suite 500, 7100 Baltimore Boulevard, College Park, MD 20740. Single copies cost \$8. Annual subscription: \$83.

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EXTENSION IN MICHIGAN BOOK AVAILABE

"Plus Two Score," a history of the Extension Service in Michigan from 1940 to 1980 is now available for \$10, reports Kenneth M. Fettig, publications coordinator at Michigan State University's Cooperative Extension Service. Checks may be sent to CES History, MSU Bulletin Office, P.O. Box 231, East Lansing, MI 48823-0231.

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AG COMMUNICATOR TO HEAD HISPANIC GROUP

Phil Villa-Lobos, public affairs specialist with the News Division of USDA's Office of Information, has been re-elected president of the USDA chapter of HACE (Hispanic American Cultural Effort).

Villa-Lobos, who is responsible for Hispanic news issued by USDA and media liaison with the Hispanic news media, was planning a mid-January free luncheon for prospective members of the organization. The acronym--HACE--is an imperative for the Spanish "hacer," the infinitive for "to do."

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## "USDA ONLINE" USERS OFFERED SHORTCUTS

Those who electronically access "USDA Online," the computerized news and information service of USDA's Office of Information, may not be aware of some shortcuts in reading items from the service.

For example, if you're interested in reading only "AGa.m.," the 2-page daily news summary prepared by OI's News Division, it takes three actions to read the latest issue.

At the system prompt (>), simply enter USDA AGAM. When the computer responds with "Read, Scan or Search" you simply enter letter R (for "Read"). Then when the computer responds with "Press RETURN for the latest issue, or enter STARTING and ENDING dates," simply press the RETURN or ENTER key, and start reading the latest issue of "AGa.m."

The same shortcuts are available for the other "USDA Online" services:

- USDA NEWS for USDA national news releases

- USDA RNEWS for agency regional or state releases

- USDA CRB for national crop and livestock reports

- USDA OASS for outlook and situation report summaries

- USDA FAS for the weekly world roundup of agricultural information and other Foreign Agriculture Service reports

- USDA FPL for latest "Farm Paper Letter," a News Division newsletter

The user can always go from one menu service into another service by entering STOP, and when the computer says "Enter a service code or HELP for a list," enter the code for specified service, i.e. NEWS, RNEWS, CRB, etc.

Two new menu items will shortly be available to "USDA Online" users:

AGCAL for calendar of significant agricultural events and AGFAX for significant facts about agriculture.

A reminder for removing the copy breaks "More?... (Yes or No) --" during the reading of "AGa.m." or other releases or reports: Before entering USDA at the system prompt (>), enter the phrase: TERM TYPE HARDCOPY and press RETURN key. Immediately you will get another system prompt (>) following which you begin your "USDA Online" access code.

For further information about "USDA Online," contact Special Programs Division, Room 536-A, Office of Information, USDA, Washington, DC 20250, send message via Dialcom electronic mail to mailbox AGR002, or call (202) 447-7454.

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## MORE 'LAP' PORTABLES; GETTING BETTER

Since their introduction about three years ago, more firms are making "lap" portable microcomputers and newer models continue to be introduced.

One of the most popular, both from its capabilities and its low price, has been the Radio Shack TRS-80 Model 100, made by Tandy Corporation. The Model 100 was an instant hit with journalists when it was first introduced (and with government and university public affairs and editorial offices).

Now, Tandy Corp. is introducing its new Model 200, which has a bigger screen and more memory than its Model 100 predecessor. The liquid crystal display is doubled from 8 lines on the 100 to 16 lines on the 200. Weight of the new portable, priced at \$999, is increased slightly, from 4 to 4.5 pounds.

INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, state departments of agriculture and land grant universities. Any items, comments and inquiries should be addressed to either John Crowley or Nancy Bevis, Office of Information, Room 536A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250 or to AGR009 mailbox on the Dialcom system, or call (202) 447-7454.

